

Town of Stow Board of Health

Minutes of the January 13, 2022 meeting

Meeting was held via zoom

Meeting ID 895 5815 2333 Passcode: 437067

Present: M. McDowell, Chairperson, M. Rising, member

J. Garreffo, Health Agent

Absent: M. Evdokimoff, member

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM by Chairperson, McDowell

Agent Report

J. Garreffo- Stow COVID cases, as of January 6, 2022, Mass DPH report, were 10.34%. This was an increase of 5.79% from the December 30, 2021 report. Most of the communities in the Nashoba District have seen an expected increase due to December and January holiday season.

J. Garreffo explained the use of Code Red for contact tracing. The Code Red notification system will send text messages to positive contacts and will send a follow up voicemail. Nashoba Nurses received over 300 cases in one day. Their staff can handle 100 a day. J. Garreffo said they needed other tools to help keep up. They hired 5 Contact Tracers and Nursing staff and are also working at vaccine clinics. Nashoba has been providing vaccination clinics in Shirley, some booster clinics, but are focusing on getting the children vaccinated. By the end of the month, they will be acquiring and administering the Pfizer vaccine. Right now, they are giving Moderna boosters. They can provide the Pfizer vaccine for 5–11-year-old group. This will allow them a broader target for vaccines.

M. Rising asked about Mass Notify. J. Garreffo explained that the person who tests needs to upload the system on their phone and must enter the information into the system.

M. McDowell asked if the mask mandate was still standing in the schools. J. Garreffo said yes, until February 29, 2022. Schools can apply for a waiver if their vaccine rate meets standards, but none of the NABH district schools have.

Well Regulations Review

M. McDowell would like to put off reviewing the final draft of the well regulations because one of the Board members could not attend the meeting tonight and will wait until February 10 meeting. J. Garreffo would like to talk about the PFAS test requirement, to be a recommendation and add the hot spot areas to be tested. He will send an email with the minor changes.

Minutes review from previous meetings. M. Evdokimoff sent in comments that she has reviewed the minutes. M. Rising made a motion to accept the minutes for July, October, November, and December 2021 as corrected. M. McDowell, seconded, minutes approved.

41 Edson Street - Review building permit application for remodel of existing finished basement

J. Garreffo- reviewed the building permit application and proceeded to check room count. There is a difference between the Assessors records and the Board of Health file. J. Garreffo has discussed the proposed changes with the homeowner, and it is not changing much from what is existing.

Katherine Keyes, homeowner said they purchased the home 6 months ago. Property was listed as a four bedroom. She was confused with the septic information she was provided. The previous owners added an addition in 1998. The four bedrooms exist on main level, and they would like to update the space on the lower level. It is finished but has a 3-inch gap to step down into the laundry and half bath, feel it is very unsafe and they want to even out the flooring, and update the laundry room and the half bath to a full bath. They will also use the space downstairs to work from home a few days a week and use as a yoga studio. Understand the septic was designed for a 3 bedroom, and not planning to add square footage or change the footprint.

M. Rising asked how the Assessors have records that state the home has 4 bedrooms and it is a 3-bedroom septic design. J. Garreffo said the file contains the first septic permit from 1969 as a 3 bedroom and a repair permit in 1993 that also indicates a 3-bedroom house. The Title 5 Inspection report states the home has 4 actual bedrooms but a 3- bedroom septic design. The assessors look at it differently with square footage not specific rooms.

K. Keyes said their closing was delayed because of the septic tank replacement and they should have done more due diligence and understand now there is more to the septic design information.

J. Garreffo said some options they discussed would be limiting the property by having 3-bedroom deed restriction recorded and later if they upgrade the system to a 4 bedroom, the Board could submit a letter stating the 3-bedroom deed restriction could be removed at that time.

J. Garreffo said the uses of the rooms are staying the same.

M. McDowell said if a deed restriction is recorded now, but if the system is upgraded 15 years from now, a letter could be in the file to show what was discussed for future changes.

K. Keyes asked if the language could be on the deed form to remove it after upgrade.

J. Garreffo said he would have to review the document, it may not be able to be removed, but it may state that if the system is upgraded, that document no longer applies.

M. McDowell would like to submit a note to file or in the minutes, that states the Board will revisit the deed restriction if the system is upgraded. M. Rising agrees, there should be a document that can be discussed at a meeting. M. McDowell would agree to submit a basic note to file as Board members could be different later.

J. Garreffo said he will forward the Title 5 document to K. Keyes to review. K. Keyes will forward to her attorney.

J. Garreffo asked if the Board would approve him signing the building permit for the work on the downstairs.

M. Rising and M. McDowell agreed that J. Garreffo could sign off and M. McDowell will forward documentation for the file.

Member Updates

M. Rising- would like updates on the FY23 Budget.

C. Colosi has submitted the preliminary FY23 Budget electronically, but some items are incomplete. A placeholder is under ACO until and updated agreement is received from Boxborough.

M. Rising asked to discuss the correspondence on a mask mandate. M. McDowell said there have been both positive and negative calls and emails about it to the Board of Health office.

J. Gareffi said Boxborough, Groton, Lancaster, Littleton, and Harvard have adopted mask mandates. M. McDowell asked about the Town Building Mask Mandate. C. Colosi said It was distributed to employees today. M. McDowell said she feels that the municipal buildings and the schools already must wear masks, but who is going to enforce a mandate in Town? M. Rising said if she had an idea of how many residents are in favor of it, it would help to decide on this, peers could help be the educators. J. Garreffi comments- Littleton has a mandate, he is the enforcing agent and most of it involves education. Some of the onus falls on the store managers, but hard for teenagers that work in some of the convenience stores to expect them to enforce it.

Public Comment

Maureen Crawford, resident, said she does not understand why several towns have required masks to be worn when people and Pfizer and the CDC say masks don't do anything. I want to voice that people have not come up to me and asked where my mask is due to my medical condition. They don't work. M. McDowell-Thank you for your comments.

No other public comment.

M. McDowell said mandating an entire town to wear masks is not going to change much. M. Rising agreed. We need to let it stand as it is now. If we queried store owners about whether they would like to post signage it is their prerogative.

J. Garreffi said other Towns have put up signs to recommend wearing masks in stores. It is a recommendation per Board of Health but not a mandate.

M., McDowell would like to discuss at each monthly meeting.

J. Garreffi asked if the Board would like signs distributed. M. Rising said she does not feel we need to do that at this time; M. McDowell agreed and would like to revisit in February.

Office Business

C. Colosi- reported on the correspondence received in the office from residents about Rubbish Haulers. She has been receiving permit renewal applications for annual permits. Some hauling businesses are merging.

M. McDowell said residents need to submit any questions or concerns, in writing, to the Board 5 business days prior to the scheduled meeting. This will allow ample time for Board members to review.

M. McDowell would like to put together a request form for residents to fill out prior to a meeting.

C. Colosi received an email from Jenna Montgomery, Nashoba Health Educator, regarding the process for residents using at-home test kits for Covid and what to do if they test positive. The information will be posted on the Town website.

J. Garreffi said that he was looking into the purchasing of home test kits, 15,000 would be the smallest order, and some towns may want to put a bulk order to save on cost. Denise Demboski has ordered 1,100 home kits for Stow, but they have not come in yet.

Public Comment:

Questions from resident Kathleen Fisher

Trash Haulers, who are they and how many have merged. C. Colosi has not received any information from any of the haulers directly as to who has merged. It has been residents reporting. EL Harvey has purchased Mr. Trashman.

After all applications have been approved and permits issued, a list of current licensed haulers will be on the Board of Health website.

2. PFAS- who is coordinating the testing- Town Center area is under the direction of Wilcox and Barton and the Building Department. Other areas of town could be under UMASS Program testing information can be found on the DEP site.

Correspondence Review

Letters/ Email received regarding a mask mandate pro and con were reviewed.

92 Great Road- Letter review from Kathleen Fisher –K. Fisher said that a letter that was talked about at the Selectboard meeting was mentioned that she does not have. Did J. Garreffo submit something to her regarding her letter.

J. Garreffo – said he sent a memo regarding his inspection at 92 Great Road to the Board of Health office.
K. Fisher said she sent a letter to J. Garreffo today.

No further comments or questions on correspondence.

M. Rising made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:25 PM. M. McDowell seconded the motion, all in favor.

Meeting adjourned.

Next scheduled Board of Health meeting- February 10, 2022, at 5:00 PM